

Amendments to the Claims

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

Claim 1. (original) A process for the preparation of multiple cross-linked derivatives of hyaluronic acid, which process comprises covalently cross-linking HA via two or more different functional groups, wherein said cross-linking is effected by contacting HA with one or more chemical cross-linking agents so as to form two or more chemically distinct cross-links, between said HA molecules.

Claim 2. (original) A process according to claim 1 wherein the functional groups are selected from hydroxyl, carboxyl and amino.

Claim 3. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the crosslinking is effected by means of two or more different bonds selected from the group consisting of ether, ester, sulfone, amine, imino and amide bonds.

Claim 4. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the cross-linking agent is selected from the group consisting of formaldehyde, glutaraldehyde, divinyl sulfone, a polyanhydride, a polyaldehyde, a polyhydric alcohol, carbodiimide, epichlorohydrin, ethylene glycol diglycidylether, butanediol diglycidylether, polyglycerol polyglycidylether, polyethylene glycol diglycidylether, polypropylene glycol diglycidylether, and a bis-or poly-epoxy cross-linker.

Claim 5. (previously presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein an ether bond is formed using a crosslinking agent selected from the group consisting of bis epoxides and poly epoxides under alkaline conditions.

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April 16, 2004

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Art Unit 1623
Examiner
Confirmation No. 3882

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Re: U.S. Utility Patent Application
Application No. 09/920,286; Filed: August 2, 2001
For: **Process for the Production of Multiple Cross-Linked Hyaluronic Acid Derivatives**
Inventor: Xiaobin ZHAO
Our Ref: 0623.1110001/LBB/MGP

Sir:

Transmitted herewith for appropriate action are the following documents:

1. SKGF Cover Letter;
2. Supplemental Amendment and Reply Under 37 C.F.R. 1.111; and
3. One (1) return postcard.

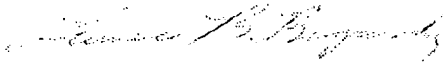
It is respectfully requested that the attached postcard be stamped with the date of filing of these documents, and that it be returned to our courier. In the event that extensions of time are necessary to prevent abandonment of this patent application, then such extensions of time are hereby petitioned.

Commissioner for Patents
April 16, 2004
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The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is hereby authorized to charge any fee deficiency, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-0036.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosures

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